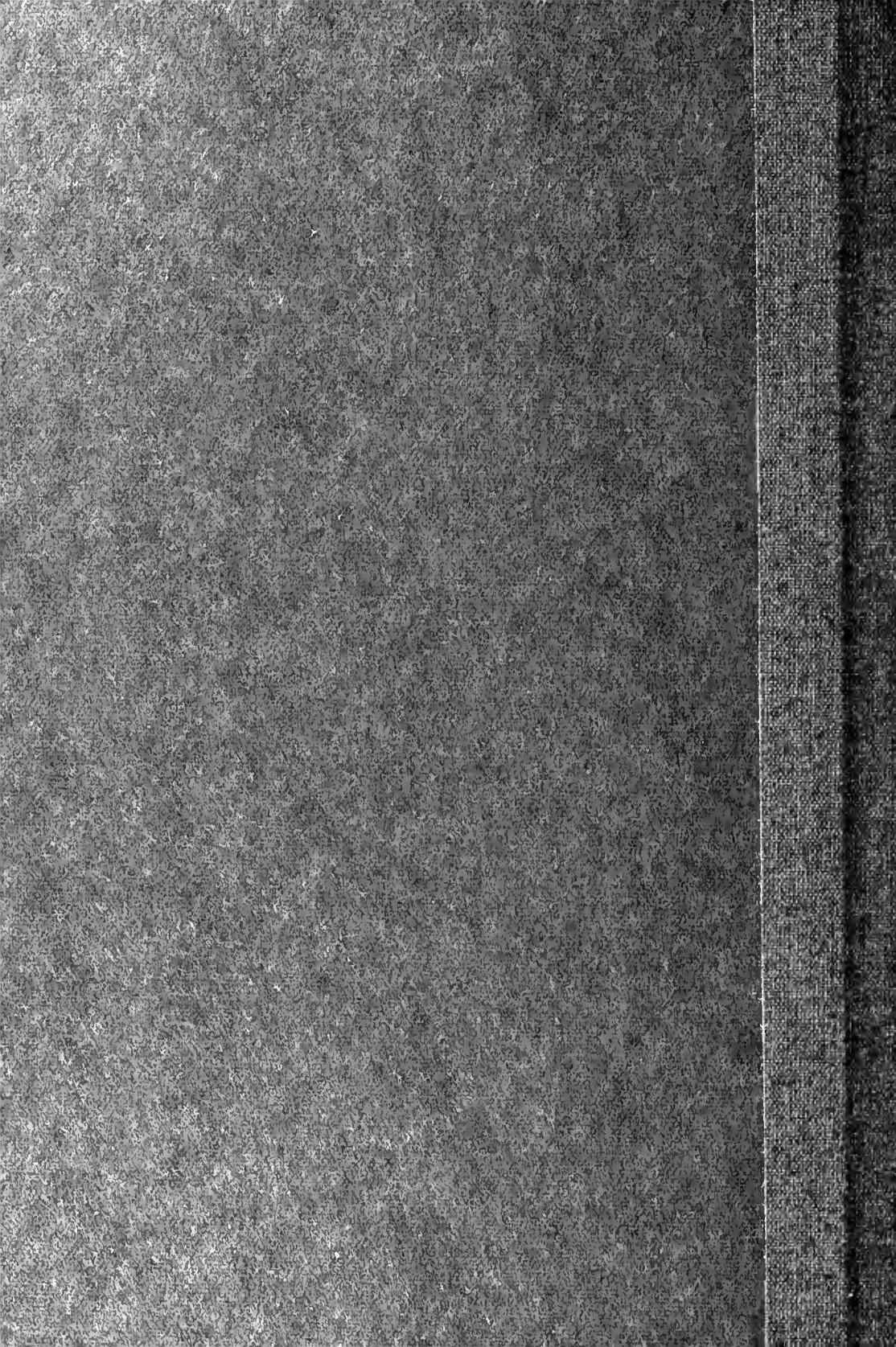


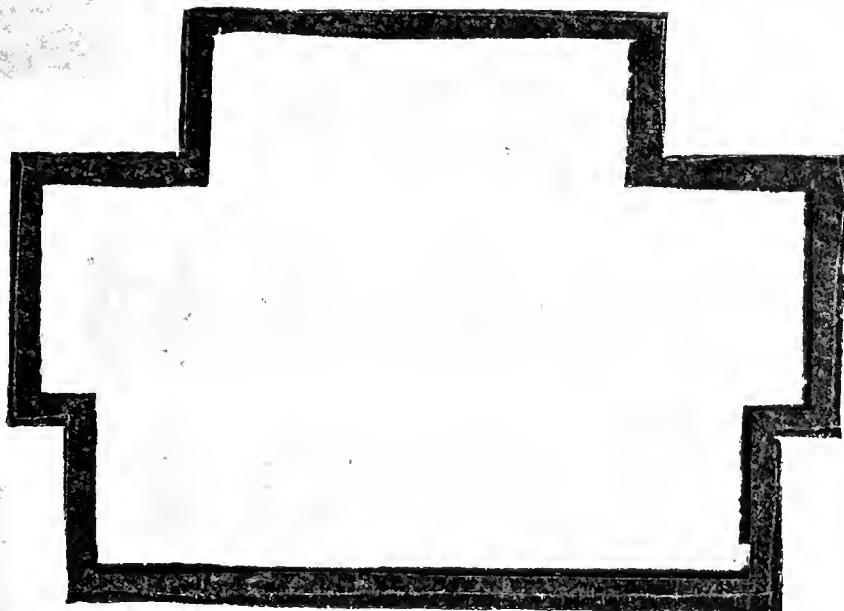
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HER NAVAJO LOVER

Dec. 14th 1903
24664

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Her
NAGO
LOVELY

BY

W.H. Robinson



OBERT, do you know that the Welles actually, actually, have a Chinaman for a nurse girl?"

"I am sure there is nothing remarkable about that." I replied with cheerful prevarication. "Mrs. Dearsley has a

Pima Indian boy who not only washes the dishes, but also washes Mrs. Dearsley's hair."

"Impossible!" cried Catharine.

"My witness is unimpeachable," I rejoined. "I had it from Mrs. Dearsley herself."

We were sitting in the private dining-room of the "Owl." The dinner was the epitome of culinary art according to How Gee. and How Gee was, on the whole, the best chef Charlie Dick and Co. ever had. Nine months' residence in Arizona had quite reconciled me to How's combination of Spanish, French, and Chinese cookery, but Catharine, who had arrived only the day before, was disposed to be critical.

"To think of your having to endure this nearly a year," she said with a furtive look at the flapping blouse of our Chinese waiter. "Certainly we shall keep house."

And that was what brought us to the question that follows one to the uttermost parts of the earth. Where would we find some one to prepare our dinners, and who would wash our dishes?

"It will be necessary," I continued, "to find two girls somewhere. You must have a good cook in the kitchen, and a responsible maid to look after the front part of the house, and relieve you of some of the care of Bruce and Louise."

"But where can they be found?" asked Catharine, in despair.

"Why not try Mexican town?" I ventured.

The suggestion was followed, and after a week's diligent search we were rewarded by the discovery of--Anita.

"She used to work for Mrs. Weston," said Catharine, "and Mrs. Weston says she is amiable and willing."

She was, and more. Her sponsor had been much too modest in her recommendation. She brought to our kitchen the graces of a belle of Seville. She had a perfect olive complexion, dark eyes, hair that might have belonged to the daughter of a Castilian don, a gracefully rounded form, and the dainty hands and feet that are alike the heritage of patrician and peon in the land of Manana; a voice that called back the guitars of Andalusia, and a face that told of Moorish castles as well as Aztec temples.

As an ornament Anita Acosta surpassed our most sanguine expectations, but as a cook--She could make good tortillas, fair chili-concarne, and impossible tamales. Beyond that her skill did not attempt to essay. She talked of enchiladas, but we begged her to refrain. Could she make bread?

"No puedo, senora."

Broil steak?

"No, senora."

Boil potatoes?

"No."

But we discovered that, although she knew but little of the art of washing dishes, she was a master in the science of breaking them; and, while she could iron clothes only passably, she could steal them superbly.

During the first week of her stay with us she must have added to the wardrobe of the Casa de Acosta enough towels, napkins, sheets and handkerchiefs to have fairly embarrassed it with riches.

One afternoon she announced tearfully that her mamma was muy enferma; that she must go home at once, but would return at five.

Catharine noticed that even Anita's usual plumpness had increased most suspiciously during the last hour. Catharine insisted on a search; Anita's leave-taking could brook no delay. Catharine is not large, Anita is not small; Catharine under the excitement of the moment, superinduced by Arizona traditions, and the proximity of the family gun, produced the latter, and a search was instituted under some intimidation. As a result, half a dozen doilies and Catharine's most treasured centerpiece were saved for our future use, and lost forever to the family of Acosta. Anita left in tears.

The explanations and diplomacy necessary to avoid the issuance of a warrant against Catharine on the charge of murderous assault occupied my entire time for the two days next ensuing the exit of Anita.

"Why not try a Chinaman?" I suggested, after the storm had blown over.

"Never!"

"We might secure Colonel Welles's nurse girl," I ventured.

I shall never mention to Colonel Welles, my wife's reply.

For a week we took our dinners at the hotel, and Catharine prepared breakfast and luncheon herself; but the thermometer registered a daily maximum ranging from 105 to 115, and

I had to carry Louise, and so, on the advice of Charlie Dick & Co., we tried---Tuck Hing. Tuck's aprons were spotless, his charge of the kitchen was complete, and Catharine's responsibility for things culinary vanished as if by magic. The problem was solved.

It is true that Tuck left the house as soon as the dinner dishes were out of the way, and could be found at any time thereafter until one in the morning sitting before "Senator" Burke's faro bank at the "Palace;" but, as I told Catharine, we could not expect everything from a servant.

However, late hours, coupled with bad luck, finally got on Tuck's nerves.

"What for you all time want eggs for breakfast? I tell boy bring chops."

"No. Too warm for chops," entreated Catharine. But we had chops just the same.

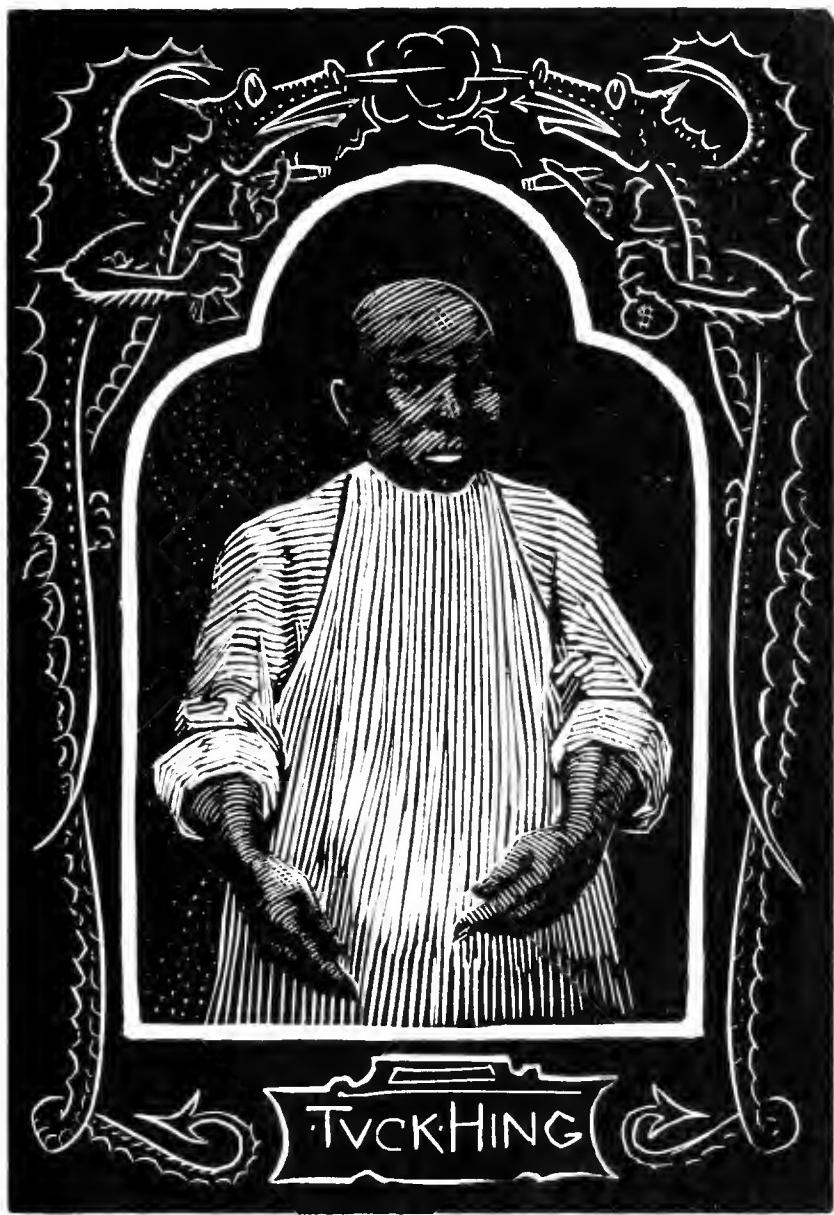
"Too hot bake bread. Get bread from bakery;" and thereafter we ate baker's bread.

"No work for thirty-five dollars any more. Hotel, he give me fifty." We compromised on forty-five, and in spite of Catharine's protestations kept the cook.

A few days later Catharine ventured into the kitchen in search of a broom. Tuck's personal clothing was a soak in the breadpan, and the Chinaman was mixing cake in the dishpan, whose condition may be left to the imagination of the reader; and ten minutes later a forty-five dollar chef was looking for a position as cook in a small family where the bread was bought from the baker, and the washing was sent out.

"Robert," said Catharine, after a respite of seven days, "I am going to try an Indian."

I made no reply, but was prepared for the



TVCKHING

worst. "Mrs. Dorrington has a girl from the Indian School, and she says she is a jewel. I wouldn't expect one to be able to do much cooking, but she could wash dishes, and scrub, and launder the clothes. I'll try the experiment, anyway."

Catharine went out to the Government Indian School. "Yes," said the Superintendent, "it is a vacation with us, and I think I can get you a fairly good girl."

When I came home that night the experiment was in the kitchen. I inquired of Catharine what we should call her, expecting to hear a name that was musical, and perhaps mystic as well, which a primitive and imaginative people had used to clothe a poetic idea.

"She says her name is Mary Brown," responded Catharine bluntly, "and she looks it. But," she added, "if she isn't handsome, the Superintendent says she is good, and she has an arm like a blacksmith's."

Our education in Indian lore progressed rapidly during the next few months, and our traditions suffered. We had always read that an Indian was stoical. So he is when on parade, but Mary would sit out by the fence on summer evenings, gossiping with Mrs. Dorrington's Maricopa Effie, and giggle by the hour.

An Indian is popularly supposed to have very loose ideas of ownership. I have heard it stated that anything one may have in his yard, and not nailed, offers an irresistible temptation to a perapetic aborigine, and that a red-hot stove is presumed to present no insurmountable obstacle to an Indian of an acquisitive disposition. Here permit me to aver that neither Mary nor any of her race whom we

**have employed, have ever, to our knowledge,
stolen from us a single chattel.**

**Who ever saw in the pages of Indian romanticists the portrait of an Indian vocalist?
But Mary could sing like a vaudeville star,
and whistle like a newsboy.**

"Where, O where, do you suppose Mary learned those songs?" asked Catharine in amazement. It was a Sunday morning in June; Mary had wakened with the dawn--it is remarkable how early the dawn comes on a June morning in Arizona,-- we were trying to sleep, and Mary was trying to sing, and Victory was perching high on Mary's banner. She was lying on her cot out in the yard, singing the popular songs of the last twenty years with geological regularity, and she never slighted a verse.

She started in the Archaean age with "Cricket on the Hearth," then came the Paleozoic with "Grandfather's Clock," and so on up through "Silver Threads among the Gold," "After the Ball," "Two Little Girls in Blue," "Sweet Marie," "Dolly Gray," and "Hiawatha," but praises be to Allah she drew the line on coon songs.

The Pimas tell how, one day, when they were at war with the Apaches, and the Pima braves were all away, the Apaches raided one of their villages; and while they spared the children they murdered every squaw in camp. Why their devilishness should take this particular form had never been quite understood. It occurred to me that Sunday morning that if Mary's musical ability was a common trait of Pima women, and if the Apaches had ever heard them sing their action was more than excusable.

We afterward learned that Mary would hear a song, absorb the air, and then buy the music and learn every word of every verse; for Mary had been at school three years, and could spell out the words of a letter or story fairly well.

Another accomplishment of Mary which deserves special mention was her gum-chewing. With her it was an art, and the culminating point would be reached when she would bring her jaws together with a snap, and the gum would crack like a young cannon-cracker. When she and Effie gossiped, every pause in the giggles would be punctuated by a report which brought to mind the closing hours of a Chinese New Year.

"Mary has too much to do," announced Catharine one evening.

"Then why don't you take her gum away and send Effie home?" I essayed, with what Catharine calls an ill timed attempt at levity. "Now, Robert, be serious. She has too much work to do, and you say every day that I need a maid for the front part of the house. What would you say to my getting another Indian girl?"

"Well," I ventured, "a duplicate of Mary would certainly harmonize beautifully with the hall portieres."

"If we could get a girl who would be as good to the children as Mary has been, we would be very fortunate," retorted Catharine. Mr. Blaisdale," she continued, "says there is a Pueblo girl here, who has been educated at Carlisle, whom he thinks we could get. She is smart, well-educated, and pretty."

"Sounds something like Anita's recommendation," I suggested.



"You know Indian girls don't steal," replied Catharine indignantly.

"Our Indian girls," I amended. "It's your refining influence, Catharine."

"Then let us hope that Lilly, also, will reflect my virtues."

There was nothing left for me to say, and Lilly was sent for and arrived duly.

Mary was quite the average Indian, but Lilly was exceptional. Her complexion was lighter than most Indians, her features were regular, and she carried herself well. She had the abundant hair of an Indian, but its texture was unusually fine. She spoke English fluently, without the little pause between words that is nearly always noticeable in the conversation of the school Indian, and her voice was low-pitched and melodious. She had one trait rarely found in an Indian; she was neat. This was all the more apparent after three months of Mary, for neatness was not one of Mary's virtues. Mary was evidently so closely allied to the soil of her ancestral desert that she could not long endure a separation.

After a week's trial Catharine announced in triumph, "Lilly can actually see when there is dust on the piano, and will wipe it off without being told;" and, though unbelievable, it was so.

Soon after Lilly was added to our household, our next-door neighbor employed an Indian boy to take care of his yard and stable. Juan was a well built, good-looking Navajo boy, who had picked up a Mexican name some place, and who had the educational advantages of two years at Albuquerque and one year at the Phoenix school. His family had

large holdings of sheep and goats on the Navajo reservation, and among the Indian girls of the town Juan was held to be a most eligible young bachelor.

We had noticed some time before that, in matters of gallantry among the Indian servants, the girls were quite as apt to take the initiative as the boys, and we observed that Juan was often the recipient of mementoes of tender regard from the hands of our girls. Mary was the more ardent wooer, but her advances had not the polish and grace of Lilly's attentions, and, as Lilly gradually seemed to find more favor in the eyes of her hostler brave, Catharine looked for trouble from our Pocahontas of the kitchen. "You know how terrible Indians are in their jealousy," she warned.

"Yes," I assented, "in novels; but among our aboriginal Phoenix domestics, Catharine, I have never noticed that homicide or even sanguinary assault is the necessary culmination of unrequited love."

And so it proved; for, after it became evident that Lilly was the favored one, Mary accepted her defeat like a Stoic philosopher and returned to her old habits, and chewed gum with Effie under the umbrella trees, and Lilly went down to the Plaza band concerts with Juan.

There was one thing which troubled us; while our new type, the school-educated Indian servant girl, might combine a hundred virtues, there was room for suspicion that, like Trilby, she lacked one, and, although as constant as Penlope to him she loved, as long as conjugal affection lasted, in case of a serious quarrel, affections were transferred with startling

facility.

"I don't believe Lilly is like these other girls," said Catharine, "and I think that the regard that she and Juan have for each other is a genuine love affair, and they ought to marry each other in a civilized fashion."

I agreed heartily.

"That's just the thing," said Catharine with warming enthusiasm. "We will give them just as pretty a wedding as any one might want. It will be the salvation of Juan and and Lilly, and have a splendid influence over all these young girls."

It was a good idea, and I think I manifested enough interest over it to satisfy even Catharine, only I suggested that the principals in the case might have something to say about it themselves. However, Catharine had a way of carrying out her undertakings and I was quite prepared to have her inform me the next evening that it was entirely settled. "Who was it named the day?" I asked curiously. There was no coercion about it, was there. Catharine?"

"I set the date, of course. Don't be silly. Of course there was no coercion, and if there had been it would have been entirely justifiable." In spite of my apprehensions the courtship ran the way true love should go. Juan and Lilly were left pretty much to their own devices. It was too warm for very ardent wooing. After a succession of days when the sun is so hot that it withers grass and flowers and turns brown the leaves of the pepper trees; when at night the clouds come up and cover the sky in the vain attempt to bring rain, and hold down the stifling heat like a great blanket, it is hard for true lovers, be



their skins red or white, to bring their thoughts higher than cooling drinks or ices. It was part of Lilly's duties to help Mary with the dinner dishes, but Mary would usually send her off, and tell her to go and find Juan; and then Lilly would array herself in a fresh dress, and as soon as the sun was down, seat herself on the Bermuda grass by the side of the house, away from the trees, to get any coolness there might be in a passing breeze. Soon Juan would appear, sometimes neatly dressed in a pair of dark trousers, a blue shirt, and a flowing tie, and fairly clean; but often, to tell the truth, looking rather disreputable, and showing both perspiration and irritation, induced by the 114 degrees of fahrenheit of the past few hours.

Sometimes they would take a walk. If they had money they would generally stroll leisurely down to the "Wave," and there regale themselves with ice cream sodas, or iced watermelon. Occasionally they would stay at home, and sit on the kitchen porch, swing their feet over the edge, and indulge in a good deal of laughter and rough badinage, not far different from that enjoyed by rustic swains of our own race. Mary would watch these proceedings with unmoved equanimity, and occasionally join in their levity, and was quite able to hold her own with them in repartee, in spite of her limited education. But while the evenings were given over to rest and recreation, as the time set for the wedding approached, the days grew more and more strenuous. In order to get the advantage of the comparative cool which came with the breeze at the dawn, the only hour of the twenty-four when the stifling mid-summer

heat of the desert was tempered, Catharine and Lilly were up with the sun, and with the aid of a seamstress were hard at work on the trousseau.

I was afraid that Catharine would make herself ill over the work of preparation, but she seemed to enjoy it, and said I ought to be willing to allow her at least one dissipation to take her mind away from the heat.

A week before the appointed day Catharine announced that the last stitch had been taken, and that it was high time to begin the other work of preparation. The ceremony was to take place in the afternoon at five, a little reception was to follow, and at seven a supper to the Indian friends of the bride and groom was to be served on the lawn.

As I attempted to explain matters to Juan, I was not sure whether he was simply bashful, or was becoming bored with the whole matrimonial arrangement.

"Now, Juan, when people marry," I explained gravely, "the friends of the bride—that's Lilly,—provide her trousseau—that's her clothes—and pay all expenses of the ceremony, except that the groom—that's you—gets the marriage license, provides a ring, and pays the minister."

"How much money do I have to pay?" asked the happy groom, his face as joyous as an undertaker's.

"Any amount you wish," I replied cheerfully. "You might talk to Dr. Gates about that. Perhaps he will not charge you anything."

"I did ask him," said Juan; "and he said he would charge me five dollars." It was evident that Dr. Gates was not going to allow sentiment to stand in the way of frugality.

Still I was somewhat impatient at Juan's solemn face, and said, perhaps with some irritation, "Well, she is worth it, isn't she? Lilly is the nicest Indian girl in Arizona, and you ought to be mighty glad to get her; besides, expenses of this kind only come once in a lifetime."

Juan never smiled. "White men get married more times. Judge Ross get married three times," and looked actually saturated with gloom.

I was getting angry. "Confound it, boy, what difference does that make to you. You're only to get married once now, anyway, and if you are not willing to put five dollars into it you would better not get married. Lilly's mistress has paid out a hundred dollars for her."

Juan's face was like the Sphinx, and I left him. I did not detail the conversation to Catharine. She had plenty to worry about as it was. However, I talked it over with Juan the next day, and he was much less funereal.

But if we were a little disappointed in Juan, Lilly was a delight. She was in a flutter of excitement from morning till night, busy at something every minute. She was to take entire charge of the flowers, and Catharine declared that Lilly's taste was as good as her own.

We all found plenty to do, and when the wedding day came at last I did not pretend to go down to the office at all, and accepted meekly the position of porter and gentleman in waiting on the bride that was to be.

Lilly did famously with the flowers. Sprays of pepper branches, bright red bunches of pepper berries, pink knots of La France roses from our garden, and smilax and carnations



from California, under her skillful fingers did wonders for the house.

Juan wasn't much in evidence. When he did show himself he looked as though he felt that his part of the performance was similar to the place occupied by the fatted calf in the feast to the Prodigal Son.

At four o'clock I discovered that he had forgotten all about the license, and sent him down to the Probate Judge's office to get it, and Juan sauntered leisurely down the street. He was evidently taking an Indian's time for it, for at quarter to five he was still absent. Guests were arriving, the bride was getting nervous, and the minister was cross. Mary was the only placid person in the house. In fact, for the past two days she had patronized everybody connected with the ceremony, and was evidently regarding it all with cynical amusement.

"I will go and get Juan," she said with her most stolid Pima air.

"Do," urged Catharine eagerly, "and for goodness sake be sure that he has the ring."

Five o'clock came, but no Mary or Juan. The little French clock with the gilded shepherdess ticked away thirty minutes more and still they did not come. I had been standing at the gate for an hour, and just as the clock struck six I saw them turn a corner and come down the middle of the street, hand in hand, both giggling like school children; but by the time they reached the house Juan had again resumed the impenetrable mask of an Indian on parade.

They followed me into the house without a word. "What in the world was the matter?" I inquired as they reached the parlor. "We

have been waiting for an hour, and began to think you did not want to get married."

Juan looked gravely over the assembled company with all the expression of a tobacco-nist's wooden Indian. He seemed to appreciate the fact that he occupied the center of the stage; then with the inimitable speech of the school Indian, with a short pause between each word, he announced, "I - am - married! I - just - married - Mary!"

Everybody looked properly horrified, and Mary giggled.

Catharine's face was white. "What does this mean?" she demanded sternly.

Juan explained, and his voice was as matter-of-fact as though he were telling how he shot a coyote or what he had for dinner.

The reader will kindly insert the little pause between each word. "It would cost me five dollars to marry Lilly, and the ring, and the license. Mr. Landon" (the Probate Judge) "say he marry me for two dollars. Mr. Gates make me pay five. Mary said if I marry her she pay the two dollars, and I could have her ring--and I marry her," and Juan looked as though he had done the only thing possible under the circumstances.

I never saw Catharine come so near hysterics in her life. She certainly laughed, and then she cried, and then we looked over to Lilly. I had been wondering while Juan was delivering his startling news whether he or Mary would be the victim of her rage, and looked cautiously to see that no knife or other possible weapon was within her reach. But Lilly wasn't looking for a knife; instead, Mary was offering an olive branch to her in the shape of tutti frutti chewing-gum, and Lilly was

accepting the same in the spirit in which it was tendered.

"I don't care," she said most nonchalantly. I wouldn't marry a man as stingy as Juan anyway; besides, I've got my pretty clothes, and another beau in Albuquerque."

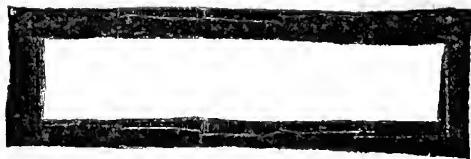
"What will you do with your guests and your supper, Catharine?" I gasped, now almost beyond talking.

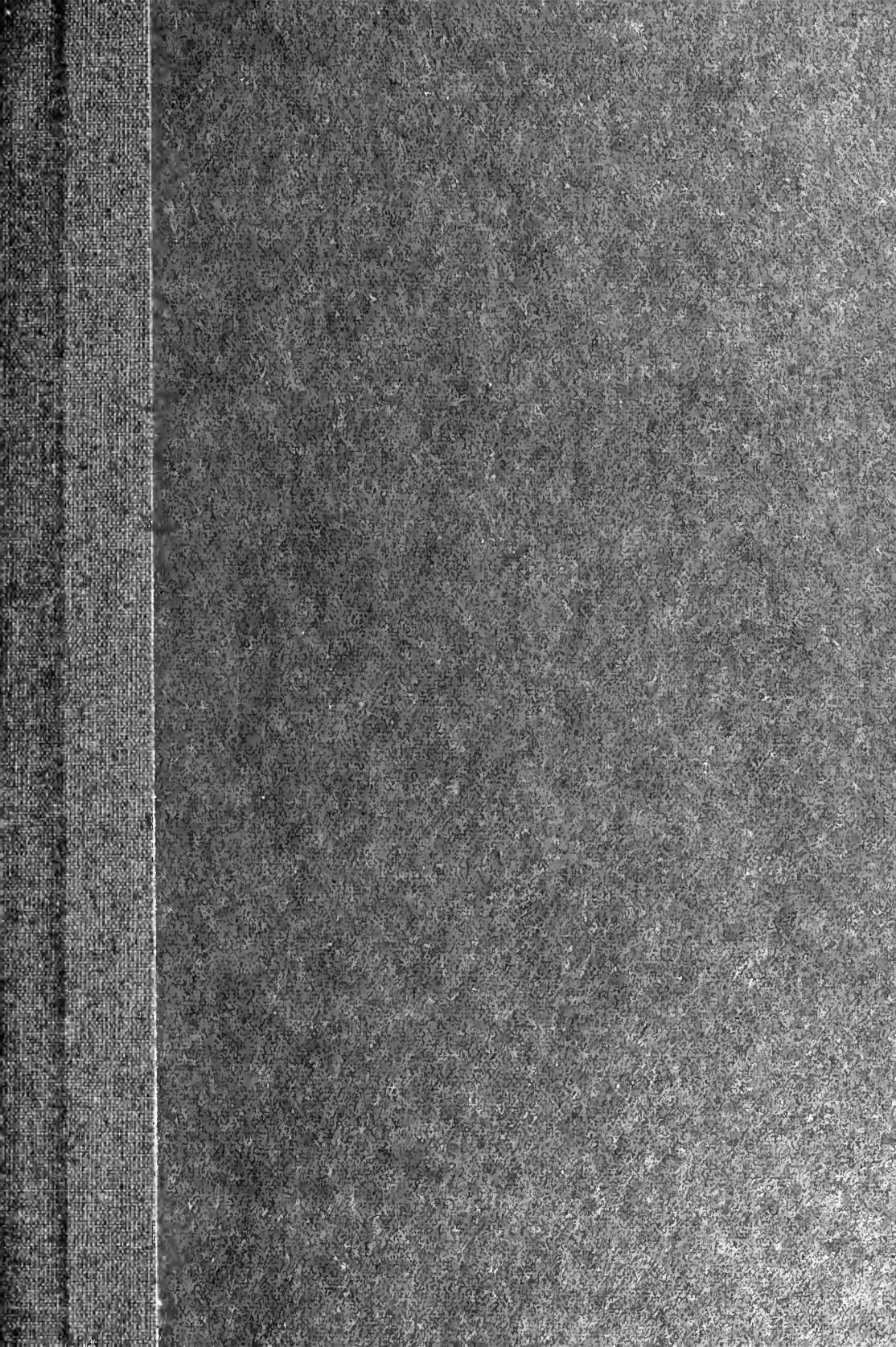
"The only thing there is left to do," laughed Catharine hysterically. "Feed one to the other; but I am afraid our Pima has usurped the place of honor. You know, Robert, victory always did perch on Mary's banner."

"And where does Dr. Gates come in?" asked some one. But Dr. Gates did not come in; Dr. Gates had gone home.

**Here ends "Her Navajo Lover," by W. H. Robinson. Pictures cut on wood by F. Holme. Printed for the Bandar Log Press at Phoenix, Arizona, December, 1903. 474 copies printed.
This is number 28**







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